

# Express Lane

*Injustice, a recent purchase by Turf Express, wins the Azeri Breeders' Cup Stakes*

BY ROBERT YATES

Mark Cornett certainly still has an eye for the ladies. On the heels of a memorable ride last fall with Tamweel, Cornett, president of the Texas-based Turf Express, is back in business with another 4-year-old filly. This time, it's Injustice, who debuted for her new connections with a determined half-length victory over Colony Band in the \$175,000 Azeri Breeders' Cup Stakes (gr.III) March 12. Similar story to Tamweel, said Cornett, who owns the daughter of sprint champion Lit de Justice out of the Nasty and Bold mare Mello But Bold in partnership with Darrell and Evelyn Yates. Another Cornett/Yates production, Tamweel, after being purchased privately last year, bagged a stakes victory at Arlington Park, finished second in the Arlington Matron (gr.III),

second in the Overbrook Spinster (gr. I), and fourth in the Breeders' Cup Distaff-Presented by Nextel (gr.I) before being sold for a reported \$1 million. And she's for sale, Cornett said, referring to his newest rising star. Cornett said he had been eyeing Injustice for months and decided to pull the trigger after the filly ran the fastest mile of the Oaklawn meeting (1:37.89) in a two-length allowance/optional claiming victory Feb.12. A day later, Cornett said he phoned her trainer, Jerry Hardin, to ask if the filly was for sale. When owner Peggy Graham gave the green light, Cornett negotiated a deal that was closed four or five days after Injustice vetted out and was given a test drive by trainer Wayne Catalano, who came from his Fair Grounds base to gallop her. Catalano

also trained Tamweel. I've watched this filly run, probably seven or eight times.

I thought she was a route filly the whole time, Cornett said. You look back to her seven-eighths races at Louisiana Downs, I thought she wanted more ground. For whatever reason, they weren't able to run the filly two turns for a while, he said. But it looks like she's matured and started to relax a little bit. She sat right off a horse the last time and seemed to finish pretty nice. I thought she would carry her speed more ground, and I like fillies that can run long, who have good tactical speed, and stay out of trouble. Under clever handling by jockey Luis Quinonez, Injustice did just that in the Azeri Breeders' Cup, which drew five others, including graded stakes winners Island Sand, Fencelineneighbor, and La Reason, plus the promising Colony Band.

Breaking from post 1, Injustice never left the rail and was never pressured through tame fractions of :23.92, :48.14, and 1:12.10. I knew if she relaxed early, we'd have a good chance, Catalano said. After the half in :48 and change, I really liked our chances. Holding a 1 1/2 length advantage in midstretch, Injustice has enough left in the tank to hold off the charge of Colony Band, who was coming off an impressive victory in her United States debut a month earlier at Gulfstream Park for trainer Todd Pletcher. She was just galloping, Quinonez said. She was doing it so smooth and relaxed. I want to ride in a race when it happens like that. She really gave me a big effort today. Sent off at 7-1, Injustice covered 1 1/16 miles over s fast track in 1:43.40.

She carried 115 pounds, two more than Colony Band. Island Sand, the 8-5 favorite, finished a well-beaten third, her fifth consecutive loss since winning last June's Acorn Stakes (gr.I). After shaking



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**Injustice holds on to win the Azeri Breeders' Cup over Colony Band**

throat and foot ailments that dogged her following the Acorn, Island Sand found more trouble at the start of the Azeri Breeders' Cup. Trainer Larry Jones said the Tabasco Cat filly had a chunk of hoof about the size of a quarter torn off and lost her left rear shoe when she was apparently stepped on by Colony Band. Losing the shoe was probably the most significant part of the deal at the time, Jones said. She likes to make her move on the turn, normally, and when they're on their left lead, they're pushing with that left rear foot, and it just slides out from under them. Jones said he's still hopeful that Island Sand, owned by Little Rock, Ark., businessman James Osborne, can make her major spring objective, the Apple Blossom Handicap (gr.I) April 9. Injustice, meanwhile, is scheduled to paddle in much calmer waters for her nest start, the Sixty Sails Handicap (gr.III) April 23 at Hawthorne. Injustice's biggest career victory, and eighth in 18 starts overall, increased her earnings to \$249,820. Once a claiming oriented operation Turf Express was the country's ninth leading owner in 2003 with 113 victories Tamweel and Injustice represent the stable's dramatic facelift. It's about quality, not quantity. All Turf Express is doing right now is looking for up and coming fillies and mares that have a potential for graded stakes, said Cornett, whose roster, pushing 100 a couple of years ago, has been trimmed to roughly 10. That's all we're focused on. The Azeri Breeder's Cup Stakes had previously been known as the Oaklawn Breeders' Cup. On Feb. 23, Oaklawn renamed the race to honor the 2002 Horse of the Year and three-time champion older filly and mare. Azeri won Oaklawn's Apple Blossom Handicap (gr.I) an unprecedented three times (2002-2004).

**Added Edge's Razorback**  
 Quinonez swept the weekend stakes when he guided Added Edge to a neck victory over the hard luck Mauk Four in the March 13 \$125,000 Razorback Breeders' Cup Handicap (gr.III) for older horses. Added Edge, a Sovereign Award winner as Canada's champion 2 year old male of 2002, edged Mauk Four after rallying five wide turning for home. Added Edge, who was coming off a second to Sir Shackleton in a high octane allowance/optional claimer Feb. 3 at Gulfstream Park, races for Robert Wilson



**Added Edge, Canada's champion 2-year-old male in 2002, wins the Razorback BC Handicap**

and Team Valor. In the absence of trainer Dale Romans, who was recording his first Oaklawn victory, trainer Morris Nicks saddled Added Edge for the Razorback. Nick's son, Ralph, saddled the son of Smart Strike in two starts last year at Oaklawn as Team Valor's private trainer. They didn't give me any instruction, said Quinonez, part of a scrum fighting for the riding title as Oaklawn passed the halfway point of its 55-day meeting. He just told me to do my best. When we hit the top of the stretch he gave me his best, and while he was getting a little tired late he still managed to hit the wire first. Mauk Four, a gritty frontrunner who had lost his previous three starts, including the \$100,000 Essex Handicap (gr.III) Feb. 12 by a combined margin of 1 1/2 lengths, finished three quarters of a length ahead of Absent Friend. Clays Awesome was another half length back in fourth. River Mountain Rd, The Lady's Groom, Separato, Intelligent Male, Gigawatt, and Purge completed the order of finish. Mauk Four had a rail trip after breaking from post 1, but was outgamed by Added Edge on the outside in the final sixteenth. This game horse just never gets a chance to relax, jockey Jefferey Burningham said. He gave me another big effort despite having pressure put on him every step of the way. Under 115 pounds, three more than Mauk Four, Added Edge ran

the 1 1/16 miles over a fast track in 1:43.88. He paid \$7.40 as the second choice. The Razorback was not a happy homecoming for even-money favorite Purge, a two-time grade II winner who secured a footnote in racing history as one of the only two horses ever favored over Smarty Jones. Racing in blinkers for the first time since he hooked Smarty Jones in last year's Rebel at Oaklawn (Purge was the 2-1 choice that day), the invader from Gulfstream came up empty in the lane when jockey Robby Albarado mashed the gas pedal. Running down the backside, I thought I was exactly where I wanted to be, said Albarado. I wanted to be in front when we straightened out in the stretch. I squeezed on him at that point and didn't have anything under me. Future plans are uncertain for Added Edge, who has earned \$552,326 off eight victories in 19 starts. Following his maiden victory, Team Valor purchased two-thirds interest in the now 5 year old son of Smart Strike-Sweet Nostalgia, by Mr. Redoy, from Wilson. Added Edge, bred in Kentucky by Gulf Coast Farms Bloodstock, also won the Nashua Stake (gr.III) in his 2 year old championship season.